Skateaway by BeingProtector

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El wanders, wonders.

Skateaway

El was sick again, apparently. She wasn't even sure herself. Had she ever felt serene for more than a minute? She had lived in a cage, the edge of town, a lonely cabin where the only company was the blurry bright imagebox, fuzzed by the unreliable… Aria? The real air? Hopper had stuck it in place with a piece of gum, and now it worked okay. She was alone again with the flickering glimpses of pretend lives. To her disappointment, nobody in Hawkins talked quite the same. People stuttered, took back what they said, broke promises, didn't seem to care.

Hopper was mad again. Said he'd march her to school the next time she tried this. Slammed the door, made her jump. She hated loud noises. She realised she could smell him, found she had wrapped herself, unthinkingly, in one of his shirts, her pyjama bottoms completing the bizarre drag hanging on her waify frame. She got up, hurled it onto the couch, and changed into a plaid shirt, jeans and sneakers. The cabin was silent, the woods outside, the sky empty, everything waiting for her to act. She thought of the girl again and instantly decided to leave.

A more prudent child would have known the folly of walking into school while "ill" before even thinking it, but El was far from normal. From across the street she looked like any other kid, perhaps a bit awkward, diffident, her clothes seeming to shrug around her as she slouched, but as you got nearer, the enigma in her eyes, the pause about her lips, the sense that something was hanging in the air around her, was close to consuming. Mike had been the first to see it, feel it. Gradually the other kids had accepted her weird energy, to some extent her needs. Where were they at this time of day? *Ten-five-five*… No, five to eleven. She was due.

The corridors echoed with her sneaker squeaks. Inside every warm classroom sat a dozen kids, bored and obedient, with a history mundane to them, strangely rich to her. Theirs was an existence of toys, laughter, punches, expression, first times. She felt like a stutter. On rubber soles she slipped by the future troops, blackboard knocks, ardent radiators. Then she was in the usual place. The little ghost

sidled up to the door at her wonted angle, unseen by the teacher, but most importantly by her.

Today she was wearing a light blue Adidas sweater and red jeans. She remembered a word: Dustin's "snazzy", about the top, and murmured it to herself. This was a pleasant reverie… She had not woken up today: she had walked out of a dream: she was still asleep. She was a mix of nascent and true, unsure and passionate, piercing and vulnerable. She could see things others couldn't, but what to make of the simplest phemon… Phemomina…

Max shifted in her seat, seemed to sigh loudly, and looked to her right. El flinched away for a second, but returned. Something about the way her nose stuck in the air, how her face seemed stubborn yet engaged. El knew she was the same, but not. Mike was different in both ways, Dustin, Lucas. El wondered what hair that long would look like on her. Or maybe, if she wasn't sure, she could just touch Max's, and feel that soft sharp fire across her fingers…

The bell screamed from nowhere, and frightened her to death.